

clerk be authorized to make technical and conforming changes in the engrossment of H.R. 1000, the bill just considered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, on Thursday, June 10, I missed 12 votes because I was unavoidably detained in my district.

Had I been present, I would have voted "no" on rollcall 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200 and 201, and "aye" on rollcall 202, and "no" on rollcall 203.

Yesterday, on June 14, I was detained by weather when landing at Washington National Airport.

I would have voted "aye" on rollcall 204.

□ 2030

#### COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HAYES) laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
Washington, DC, June 15, 1999.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,  
*The Speaker, House of Representatives,*  
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Under Clause 2(g) of Rule II of the Rules of the House of Representatives, I hereby designate Martha C. Morrison, Deputy Clerk, in addition to Gerasimos C. Vans, Assistant to the Clerk, and Daniel J. Strodel, Assistant to the Clerk, to sign any and all papers and do all other acts for me under the name of the Clerk of the House which she would be authorized to do by virtue of this designation, except such as are provided by statute, in case of my temporary absence or disability.

This designation shall remain in effect for the 106th Congress or until modified by me.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

JEFF TRANDAH,  
*Clerk of the House.*

#### SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

#### ARMY SANCTIONING WICCA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, in recent weeks we have learned that the United States military recognizes witchcraft as a reli-

gion. Witchcraft, or wicca, as it is often called, professes no belief in the Christian concept of God.

While I find this fact disturbing in itself, it was on my drive back to Washington yesterday that my attention was called to something that I find much more upsetting. The Washington Post ran an article on June 8 on the military's religious tolerance. It points out that the Army chaplains' handbook lists religious choices open to soldiers that include wicca, black Judaism and the Church of Satan. While I might not agree that such belief systems ought to be recognized or ought to be encouraged by the United States military, I accept the diversity of thought and opinion. What I cannot understand is what the article reports, that Army Chaplain John Walton, who served at Fort Hood for 5½ years was admonished for mentioning Jesus in his sermons.

According to the article, in the interests of maintaining religious tolerance on base, Walton was allegedly sent to sensitivity training where he was asked to refrain from mentioning the name of Christ so that he would not offend others; this, at an Army base that officially sanctioned the practice of witchcraft years ago.

Mr. Speaker, I hope what I read is not true. If it is, I am incensed. America is a Nation of many faiths, but to ask that a Christian chaplain deny Christ by asking him or her to drop His name from their sermons is like asking them to reject the essential nature of their beliefs. Doing so would stray from the religious principles this great Nation was founded upon.

Mr. Speaker, it was Thomas Jefferson who called the Bible the cornerstone of liberty and our country's first President, George Washington, said, and I quote: "It is impossible rightly to govern the world without God and the Bible."

Those same ideals apply to the men and women who defend and protect this country. Our Nation's soldiers risk their lives for my colleagues and for me and for this country. Those who choose to practice Christianity deserve the right to hear Jesus' name spoken by their chaplains.

Mr. Speaker, I am a man of strong religious convictions. My faith is an extremely important part of my life, and I respect others' right to practice their beliefs. But if the United States military begins removing fundamental tenets of the Christian faith this great Nation was founded upon, it is clear that we have gone too far in our effort not to upset.

Mr. Speaker, the instructions given to our military chaplains to offend no one can be easily viewed as religious bigotry to those with deeply-rooted beliefs.

Perhaps this anti-religious attitude is simply reflective of the times. Just

weeks ago, the Washington Post featured a front-page article about a Calvert County, Maryland high school graduation ceremony in which students ignored a school ban on prayer and recited the Lord's prayer.

The reporter called the students a defiant group, as if to imply that the peaceful inclusion of God in the ceremony caused harm, but it received front page coverage simply because one young graduating student took offense at the prayer and left the building.

Mr. Speaker, have we become so sensitive to being insensitive that we can no longer say what we think or question other ideas? It is our diversity of opinion and diversity of culture that makes this country great. But if we continue down a path of religious intolerance from banning our Nation's students from praying in school, or asking our United States Christian ministers from uttering the name Jesus, we as a Nation accomplish nothing.

For that reason I have called upon Defense Secretary William Cohen to provide me with an explanation of how and why the military goes about training its chaplains to suppress such fundamental religious beliefs.

In the words of William McKinley, and I quote, "The great essential to our happiness and prosperity is that we adhere to the principles upon which this government was established and insist upon the faithful observance."

Mr. Speaker, this Nation was founded on Judeo-Christian principles. When we start forcibly suppressing those beliefs and principles, we threaten the very foundation and strength of this country, and if this trend continues, America is in deep trouble.

#### MIAMI RIVER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, the Miami River project must be a major priority when Congress acts on the energy, water and appropriations bill later this year. At long last. The Miami River appears headed for a long overdue clean-up and revitalization. For the first time, a broad-based coalition of community leaders, business interests, and officials at the Federal, State, and local levels have united to work for this goal which is vitally important for both the future of our growing trade with our neighbors to the south as well as for preserving a waterway which is a key part of our ecosystem.

I am working with members of the south Florida congressional delegation, with the Miami River Commission and the Miami River Marine Group to ensure that the Miami River is a top funding priority in the energy and water appropriations bill later this year.

Recently the prospects of a Miami River clean-up brightened considerably after the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers announced that it would pick up the majority of the costs of disposing contaminated sediments from the River. This new policy came after a meeting with Corps officials, with representatives from my office and Senator BOB GRAHAM's office, and the Miami River Commission managing director, David Miller. This decision will allow the 4-year phase dredging project proposed by the Miami River Commission to become a reality.

Under this plan the Federal Government would pay 47 million of the total cost of the 64 million required to dredge the River. The first step in funding this plan will be the approval of a \$5 million initial Federal appropriations in the energy appropriations bill. These are important economic and environmental reasons which have led us to this broad-based effort to clean up the Miami River.

The initial effort at the Federal level was begun by my predecessor, the late Claude Pepper, who placed the original language for the Miami River in the bill in 1986 and helped pass the original feasibility study of the Miami River in 1972. This resulted in the Army Corps of Engineers 1990 recommendations for navigational maintenance dredging of the River. The Miami River needs to be dredged because, after years of neglect, it has become the most polluted River in our State.

This problem originated in the 1930s when the River was dredged as a Federal navigation channel. Recent studies of bottom sediments of the River have uncovered a 65-year history of pollution from a wide variety of sources.

South Florida's post-war growth created over 69 square miles of mainly industrialized urban land areas which have loaded the River with pollutants via storm water systems. Numerous studies by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and State and local agencies all confirm that the Miami River has the most contaminated sediments in Florida and that only dredging can remove this pollution.

The need for prompt action to dredge the River is reinforced by its role as the major part of Biscayne Bay. The bay is one of the most significant water bodies in the United States, providing recreational and economic opportunities for over 2 million south Florida residents and supporting a great variety of marine life. Continued delay in dredging the River will permit the sediment to pollute this important water preserve. Failure to dredge could prevent the Miami River from becoming a major contributor to international trade and economic growth in south Florida.

As Florida's fifth largest port, the Miami River helps cargo carriers serve over 83 ports in the Caribbean and

Latin America, and I urge my colleagues to support this inclusion in the bill later this year.

#### COMMUNITIES CAN NATIONAL AWARD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Mrs. CLAYTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to announce that Goldsboro, located in the First Congressional District of North Carolina, was named 1 of 5 communities chosen from a national search to be awarded the Community of Excellence Award by Communities Can, a national coalition of communities.

Communities Can is a growing national network of communities dedicated to serving all children and their families, including those who are at risk or with special needs. Goldsboro has demonstrated many abilities in an effort to foster collaboration and cooperation among the many public and private programs that can serve and support young children and families. They have shown diligence and a serious level of involvement with designing and implementing programs that have proven beneficial to families.

Over the years this community has demonstrated an inclusive approach to serving children with special needs and an innovative spirit in utilizing the complex public program to meet the specific needs of their families.

For all of these reasons Goldsboro, North Carolina was chosen from among 48 nominees by members of the Communities Can Team at the Georgetown University Child Development Center for Child Health and Mental Health Policy.

There are several key aspects to the kind of quality, service, and support for young children and families in this community essential to making things work. For instance, in Goldsboro there is one pediatric practice that provides a true medical home for almost every child in the county. They attend to children with or without insurance, although a generous SCHIP program in North Carolina has made arrangements so that very few children in the community are without coverage.

Further, Wayne Action Group of Economic Solvency, which is the community action group and Head Start grantee in town, serves as an umbrella for a good number of family and child service efforts.

In addition, a local hospital foundation funds a person who is responsible for community organization/grant writing to assist with the implementation of ideas from the community planning efforts.

Mr. Speaker, this is the kind of comprehensive collaboration of efforts that completes a full circle enabling chil-

dren and families to effectively identify and remedy the many problems that exist and need to be addressed. I am privileged and proud to represent a community with such dedication to its children and families.

Congratulations to Goldsboro, North Carolina. I wish them much future success.

□ 2045

#### OLDER AMERICANS ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HAYES). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Mr. Chairman, 1999 has been designated the International Year of Older Persons. The year marks a time to reflect upon the contributions of our seniors and assess our efforts to secure their continued health and well-being. During this year, we honor those who contribute to our communities as grandparents, parents, workers, volunteers, and as role models. They are the keepers of our traditions and the teachers of our values. While honoring these heroes this year, we must also work to support them where help is needed. This means looking to the future and ensuring the strength of our programs that serve our elders.

The next century is anticipated to be a golden age for seniors, with life expectancy increasing and predictions that older persons will outnumber children for the first time in our history. America's seniors are more physically and mentally fit than ever before. Yet with these positive changes, we can anticipate a greater burden for our health care system.

One way of preparing for the future is to renew the Older Americans Act, which has not been reauthorized since 1995. Since that time, our Nation's seniors and the programs established to serve them have faced an uncertain future. Because these programs help our seniors to remain active, healthy and part of their communities, I have asked the House leadership to make it a priority for passage this year.

The Older Americans Act has been a special program for over 34 years. Using a small slice of the Federal budget, the Older Americans Act has provided hot meals, legal assistance, employment for seniors and services for the home-bound. I have seen firsthand how these programs assist and benefit seniors in my home State of Kansas.

Kansas seniors have given a lifetime of service. Renewing these programs that preserve their well-being allows us to give back a little to those who have made our country what it is today.

We take pride in celebrating older Americans who demonstrate new horizons for what is thought impossible for older persons. Both Bob Dole and John